

Product upward compatibility: integrating new and existing products

In today's global marketplace, customer service is a critical determinant of success. Excellent customer service includes long-term product support. However, to maintain a competitive position, a company must also consistently introduce new products. Some of these new products will be advanced (replacement) versions of existing products. These two requirements can potentially conflict.

How can a company continue to introduce new (replacement) products and still provide quality support for older products? Isn't there a practical economic limit to the number of product generations that can be supported in the long-term? The answer is to make new products compatible, to the greatest extent possible, with products already in the field. This process is called **product upward compatibility**.

In 37 years, Bently Nevada has earned a reputation for excellent customer service, including long-term customer support. For new products, our philosophy is to provide customers with better solutions to their business problems, at a lower cost. Accordingly, our newly introduced products are fully compatible with existing installed systems, or sometimes give the customer the option of replacing only part of the existing system. We have been able to provide this high level of customer service because of three important factors — superior manufacturing capabilities, innovative engineering design and excellent product marketing.

Superiority in manufacturing requires more than just building products in a quality, cost-effective and timely manner. It also requires the ability to manufac-

ture older products in the same manner. Our status as a Class-A MRP II (Manufacturing Resource Planning) manufacturer has been achieved because we have met these requirements. **Most products we introduced in the 1960s are still being manufactured today.** Except on rare occasions, we have had to obsolete a product only when the necessary electronic components required to manufacture it could no longer be obtained.

It is unreasonable to expect customers to be required to discard perfectly good, yet older, products in favor of purchasing the latest high technology offering. Innovative engineering requires the insight and creativity to design new products that are compatible with existing ones already in use. Engineers must develop the ability to adapt new technologies to old ones and to make new product designs compatible with previous ones.

Excellence in product marketing requires being close enough to the customer to "do what is right" for them. Being close to the customer means understanding the **real business and technological issues**. It requires ability on the part of Sales and Marketing to guide the customer through product compatibility issues and at the same time solve real business problems.

The removable foldout in this issue of Orbit represents Bently Nevada's dedication to product upward compatibility. Included are currently available products that were introduced in *four different decades*:

- The 3000 Series Proximity Transducer System was introduced in the late 1960s and today is still compatible with our...

- 7200 and 9000 Series Monitoring Systems, introduced in the mid 1970s, which are still compatible with our...
- Dynamic Data Manager® (DDM), Process Data Manager (PDM), and Transient Data Manager™ (TDM) Communications Processors, introduced in the 1980s, which are still compatible with our...
- Dynamic Data Manager® 2 and Transient Data Manager™ 2 Software, introduced this year.

We are very proud of this remarkable record of customer service, and we fully intend to continue the trend. We understand that you, our customers, cannot justify the replacement of installed systems, or even components of existing systems, every time a new technology arrives on the market. By making new products compatible with older products, you can update systems to newer technology at much lower installation and hardware costs.

The foldout also illustrates another aspect of Bently Nevada's success — we are a **complete systems supplier**. It has been difficult for us, at times, to make our new products compatible with our older ones. We know it is even more difficult for other vendors who do not design and manufacture all of the system components.

When you buy Bently Nevada products, you can be assured we will continue to support them with the same excellent customer service for which we have become known. And, we will continue to develop new products that are compatible with other Bently Nevada products already in the field. ■